

Business Rules Governing Use of the Process Control Number (PCN)

The purpose of the Process Control Number (PCN) is used to link fingerprint events and arrest records with dispositions. The PCN is generated at the time of the fingerprinting event and accompanies all documentation through the justice process: from the law enforcement officer's arrest through final resolution.

In order to ensure complete, timely and accurate criminal history record information, the following business rules apply equally whether the fingerprints, arrest data, or disposition data are manual, electronic or a combination of both. If a PCN is assigned, then the reporting business rules apply whether the fingerprint event results from a misdemeanor, gross misdemeanor, or a felony offense, charge or warrant. Local agreements may be developed concerning procedural details on meeting the business rules.

1. It is the responsibility of the Washington State Patrol (WSP) to supply PCNs via fingerprint card packets, labels, or block assignments. These packets will include fingerprint cards with PCN stickers affixed, pink disposition report and a sheet of extra PCN labels to be used as local policy allows.
 - 1.1 PCN Labels may be attached to a booking sheet, the Information (by the Prosecutor), the Judgment and Sentencing Report, Officer's Report, etc.
 - 1.2 Any PCN labels not used shall be destroyed.
2. One PCN will be used for each (reportable) fingerprinting event. The same PCN cannot be used for subsequent fingerprinting events.
 - 2.1 A reportable fingerprint event occurs when fingerprints are taken to document the arrest and the identification of an individual.
 - 2.2 The fingerprinting event shall occur as early in the arrest/custody cycle as is practical, but in no case more than 72 hours after being taken into arrest/custody (RCW 10.98.050, RCW 43.43.735, RCW 43.43.740).
3. PCNs will not be reused or recycled.
4. All (reportable) fingerprinting events will be reported to the WSP using PCN; these include but are not limited to:
 - a. Probable cause or warrant arrests for felonies or gross misdemeanors when a suspect is taken into custody.
 - b. Pursuant to local policy, probable cause or warrant arrests for misdemeanors when a suspect is taken into custody.

PCN Business Rules (*continued*)

- 4.b.1 If a person is taken into custody for a misdemeanor, the person should be fingerprinted and those fingerprints transmitted to the WSP.
 - c. Any booking pursuant to a preliminary appearance, arraignment or disposition when fingerprints have not been previously submitted for the underlying charges.
 - d. Pursuant to RCW 10.98.050(2), anyone charged with a felony who has not previously been fingerprinted for the underlying charge must be fingerprinted at the time of the preliminary hearing or arraignment.
 - 4.d.1 Each local jurisdiction shall adopt policies and procedures to assure compliance with RCW 10.98.050(2), which requires that all felony defendants be fingerprinted no later than the preliminary hearing or arraignment.
 - e. For out-of-state or out-of county warrant arrests, the [pink] disposition report will not be forwarded to the court. The arresting Law Enforcement Agency (LEA) shall report the disposition of the warrant to the WSP. Pursuant to local policy, the arresting LEA may either retain or destroy the disposition report form.
 - f. One PCN will be assigned at the fingerprinting event for all known underlying warrants, offenses and/or charges. New offenses, charges and warrants that are discovered after the fingerprinting event may be added without using an additional PCN as long as the arrested suspect has been in continuous custody. Should additional charges be filed and reported to the WSP, the appropriate paperwork and PCN shall be forwarded to the prosecutor, county clerk, or court for disposition reporting.
 - g. Should a suspect be released from custody and subsequently booked on additional charges (that may or may not have been a result of a previous booking incident) or for a warrant for non-compliance with pre-trial conditions of release, then another fingerprint event has taken place and a new PCN shall be assigned for that arrest.
5. The prosecuting jurisdiction is responsible for ensuring that a PCN is reported to the WSP for each reportable fingerprinting event.
- 5.1 If an incident results in more than one fingerprinting event and more than one PCN, positive linkage will be established between the(se) PCNs by entry of each PCN into the Judicial Information System (JIS) by the appropriate county clerk or court.
6. The arresting LEA is responsible for disposition reporting to the WSP when the person arrested is released and charges are not referred to the prosecutor.

PCN Business Rules (*continued*)

7. If electronic transfer of felony information has been implemented (pursuant to RCW 10.98.090) the county clerk shall transmit dispositions to the WSP. If this procedure has not been implemented, the prosecutor shall attach a copy of the judgment and sentence form to the disposition form and transmit the form to the WSP. For District and Municipal Courts, the court administrator shall promptly transmit the completed disposition form, or in a county where the JIS or other secure method of electronic transfer of information has been implemented between the court and the WSP, electronically provide the disposition information to the WSP.
8. Each fingerprinting event reported to the WSP shall be associated with a disposition. If the fingerprinting event includes multiple charges, offenses and/or warrants, each shall be assigned the same (original) PCN. When felony and misdemeanor charges arise from the same incident, a single PCN shall be assigned, even though charges may be filed in separate courts, and the dispositions shall be reported separately to the WSP.
9. If a prosecutor declines filing charges on a case for which an arrest has been made, the prosecutor shall forward a disposition report form to the WSP as “No Charges filed” and provide a copy to the arresting LEA.
 - 9.1 If a county prosecutor declines filing felony charges and refers the case to the appropriate municipal prosecutor for consideration of filing gross misdemeanor or misdemeanor charges, then the disposition report form shall be forwarded to the appropriate municipal court and the court administrator shall be responsible for disposition reporting to the WSP and the local LEA.
10. Corrections or additions to previously submitted information shall be reported to the WSP on the WSP “Correction Notice” form if an automated method of reporting has not been established.
11. Local police, jails or juvenile detention facilities shall report conviction commitment fingerprinting events to the WSP only if fingerprints were not previously submitted for the charges. If the previous fingerprinting is not known or is in question, new fingerprinting shall be completed and a new PCN assigned; the disposition report form will be forwarded to the appropriate prosecutor, county clerk, or court administrator for disposition reporting.

PCN Business Rules (*continued*)

Definitions

ARREST: Detention of a suspect at a booking facility pursuant to a warrant or probable cause arrest.

CHARGE: An offense alleged by Information, Criminal Complaint or Uniform Citation.

COMMITMENT: The incarceration ordered pursuant to the disposition of a criminal charge.

DISPOSITION: The formal conclusion of a criminal proceeding at whatever stage it occurs in the criminal justice system; as examples, guilty, acquittal, dismissal, or no charge filed.

FINGERPRINTING EVENT: A stage in the criminal justice process at which time a suspect or criminal defendant's fingerprints are taken.

OFFENSE: The acts of a suspect for which a probable cause arrest is made by an LEA.

PROBABLE CAUSE ARREST: A warrantless arrest where LEA has probable cause to believe that the defendant has committed a chargeable offense.

REPORTING ENTITY: The agency or entity transmitting the charging, fingerprint or conviction information to the Washington State Patrol (WSP) for criminal history purposes.

Questions, comments, and issues concerning interpretation and implementation of PCN Business Rules should be directed to:

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